



# ANNUAL REPORT 2022



Mennonite  
**new life**  
centre

# MESSAGE FROM THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

In Ontario, 2022 began with yet another round of social gathering limits, remote schooling, and other restrictions, and we were tired. Tired from nearly two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, with its isolation, its uncertainty, its divisiveness. Tired of seeing our clients, colleagues, and communities struggle. Tired.

But as winter turned to spring, we too began to see signs of a brighter life unfolding. Restrictions were gradually lifted and people began to gather in person again. In this report, we reflect on a year where our communities reemerged, recentered, and reimagined, and where the Centre reconfirmed its commitment to serving newcomers in all stages of their journey.

Over the course of the year we gradually reopened our offices, offering in-person services and continuing virtual services as part of our hybrid approach. Our staff's keen awareness of clients' needs and their willingness and ability to adjust services to meet them was vital during this process.

New arrivals to Canada, including those from the growing Afghan and Ukrainian communities, were welcomed with unapparelled holistic services offered from a place of compassion, love, and experience. They found caring, professional support with learning English communication skills, accessing government and community services, preparing for a job or a new career, coming to terms with resettlement trauma and grief, building social and professional networks, and much more. Three quarters of our clients sought support for multiple aspects of their lives, and with our new central intake process we were better able to identify and take care of these different needs.

The Centre experienced a transition too, when we said farewell to our former Executive Director, Shelly D'Mello. Through more than a decade of transformational leadership. Shelly guided our growth with compassion, strategic vision, and heart. We have been forever shaped by her "dreamers who do" spirit and wish her all the very best in pursuing her own new dreams.

We invite you to witness what we – our clients, staff, leadership, and communities – have achieved together in this year of reconnecting and revisioning. And as we prepare to celebrate 40 years of walking together with newcomers, we hope you continue to join us in strengthening our communities through strong, equitable, and compassionate programs and services for newcomers in Canada.



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LINC Program

# MNLCT AT A GLANCE

As a community-based charity, the Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto creates meaningful pathways for newcomers to contribute their skills, talents, and voices to their communities wherever they live, work, play, and learn.

Newcomers of all ages, genders, and cultural identities can access the tools and resources needed for social and economic integration into Canadian life. With our deep expertise – developed over 40 years of grassroots community support – we provide caring and professional support that addresses short- and long-term needs and aspirations of clients.

Services include settlement and immigration information and community connections; language training; community mental health counselling; employment, entrepreneurship, and career bridging supports; and counter-human trafficking counselling. Programs evolve to meet the needs of an ever-changing immigrant population.

## OUR MISSION

Our mission is to facilitate newcomer settlement and integration through holistic services and community engagement, carried out within a gender justice and anti-oppression framework.

## OUR VISION

We envision a society in which all people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds participate fully in all aspects of Canadian life. We have modelled an approach that brings together community engagement and community services, working together with newcomers to reduce insecurity and reach integration, strengthen voices, and increase social equality.

## OUR VALUES

- Respect
- Community building
- Participation and voice
- Equity and integration
- Peace with social justice



*"Support from She-Covery has meant that I have an anchor to facilitate my journey with less hindrance and roadblock."*

– Bhavna, Mental Health Counsellor and She-Covery Client







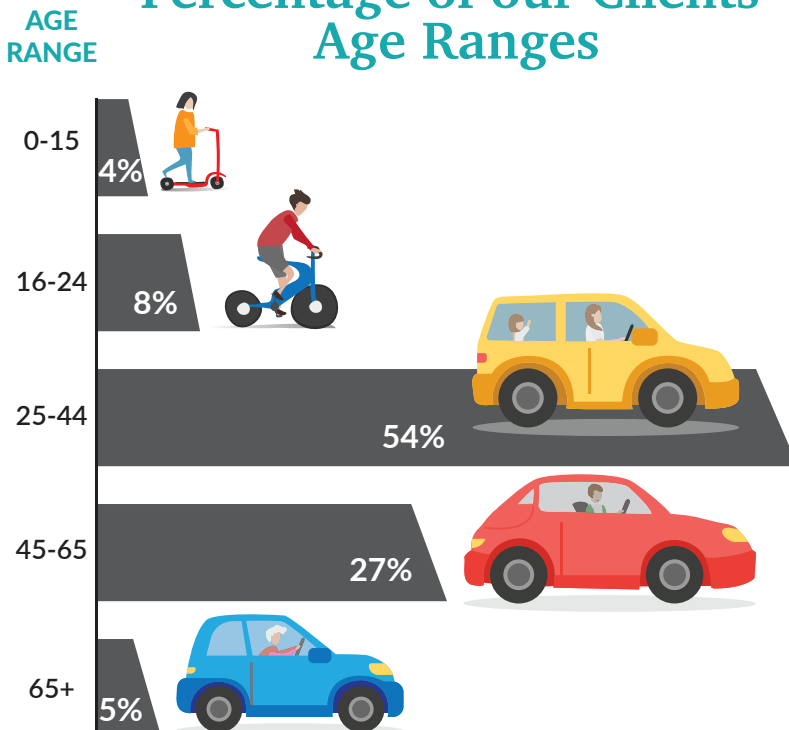
**Total client visits**  
(in-person & online)



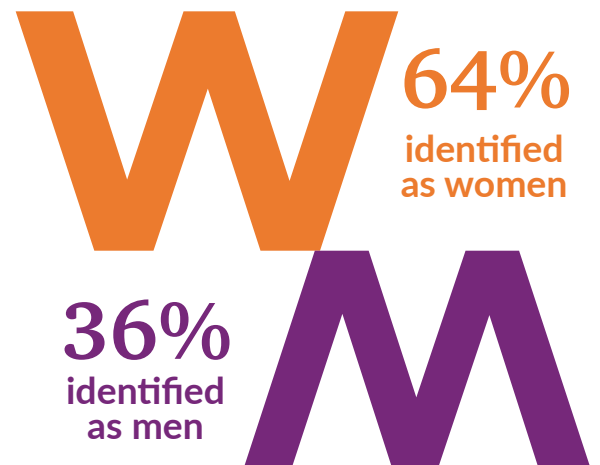
## TOTAL CLIENTS SERVED

As we transitioned to our new Client Management System, we had clients who appeared in both the old and the new systems. While this was manageable for client services, it meant some overlap when determining the number of unique clients from across the Centre. As such, 5,000 unique clients is an approximation for 2022; we will be able to report a more precise number for 2023.

### Percentage of our Clients' Age Ranges



### OUT OF OUR ~5,000 CLIENTS

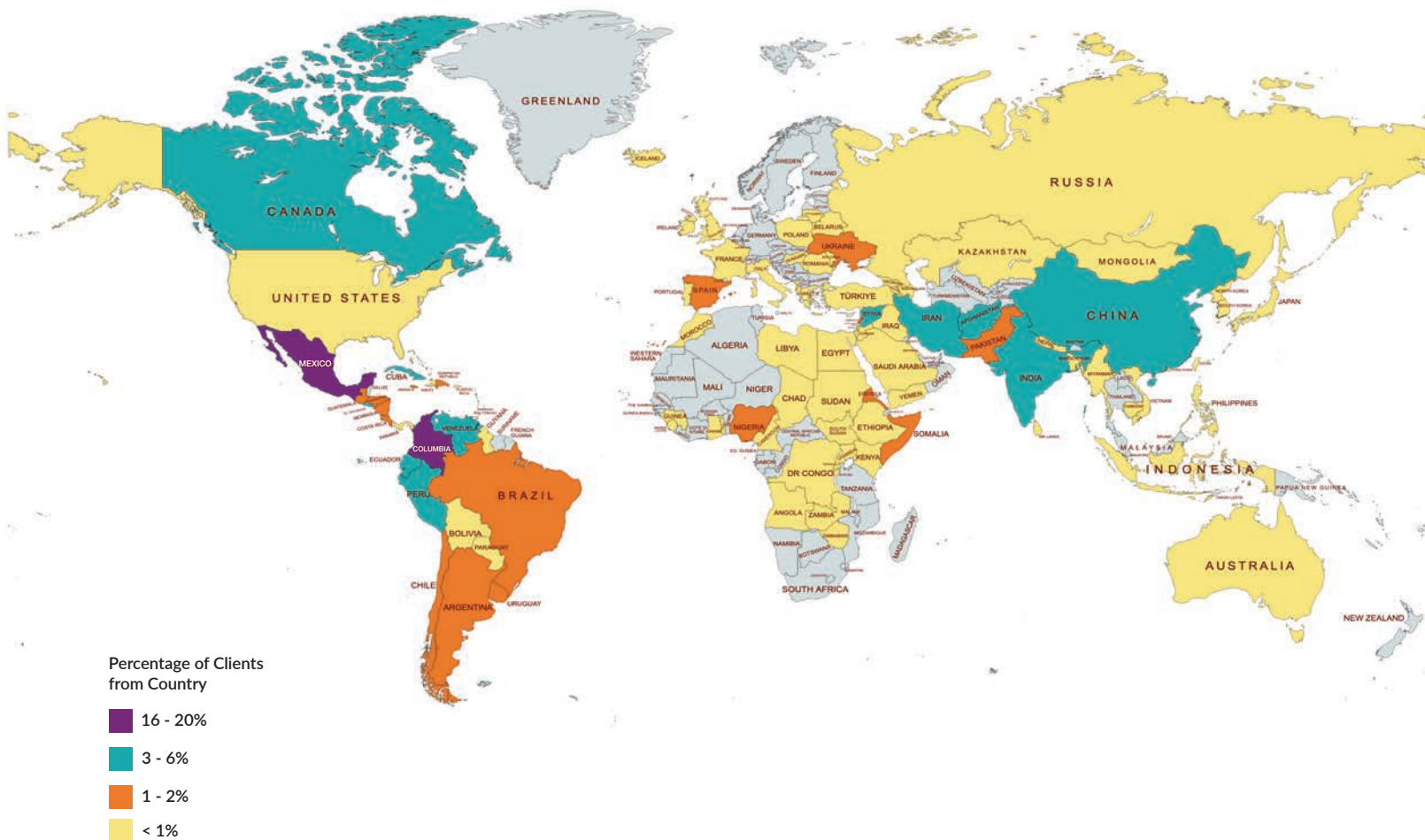


MNLCT has always had a predominance of woman-identifying clients. We also had a number of clients who preferred not to disclose their gender. As an inclusive organization, we support people in all aspects of their settlement journey.



## Top Countries of Origin

Our clients have diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, and bring a wide range of education, skills, and talents to Canada. In 2022, we served approximately 5,000 people from 107 countries around the world.



## MNLCT gave me the confidence to restart my life positively: Mehria's story

By Gertrude Tumusime



Mehria was barely 18 when she left her home country of Afghanistan, arriving in Canada after spending several months in Greece.

Like many of her compatriots, the young adult was escaping a worsening situation in Afghanistan where the Taliban were terrorizing the population – especially women and girls. Mehria remembers - quite emotionally - feeling lost when she first arrived here.

“Everything was new, I didn’t have any home... I was looking for opportunities to settle and start a new life.” she recalls.

In Canada, Mehria was warmly welcomed by a host of settlement workers, who immediately referred her to MNLCT. Finding help as soon as she arrived made her feel like she wasn’t alone.

This gave Mehria peace and the motivation to restart her life. She got help from a settlement worker at the Centre to enrol in school, find a family doctor, get a health card, do her banking, and find housing.

*“These are good points I could count on to have a successful future in Canada. The settlement worker from Mennonite helped me a lot. For example, I arrived in May and by end of August I was already in school, I didn’t waste any time.”*

The high school student is now finishing her last credits before heading to university. Inspired by technology trends in Canada, Mehria wants to study software engineering. Although she still has challenges getting a job, Mehria is optimistic. Her settlement worker has already connected her to programs that help youth find employment.

Mehria enjoys discovering new places and meeting people from different cultures. She is a self-taught photographer who shares her beautiful pictures of Canada on her Instagram. She loves the English language and works hard to improve her skills.

For now, Mehria feels at home and is finding it easier by the day. She loves Canada because there are a lot of opportunities. Someday, Mehria hopes to be one of the most effective, positive, successful, and famous people in Canada.

# OUR PROGRAMS



We are committed to designing programs and services to facilitate full participation of newcomers in all aspects of Canadian life.

## SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION

Caring and professional services tailored to each newcomer to assess and support their immediate needs and future goals. Includes information about living and working in Canada, access to government and community resources, and help building support networks and social connections.

## COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

Counselling and group programs that help newcomers, including people who have been trafficked in Canada, to overcome stress or trauma and reinforce resilience, strength, and well-being at the individual and community level.

### Language Instruction Giving Hope to Trauma Survivors (LIGHTS)

Alternative English-language training paired with mental health supports for vulnerable newcomers who have trouble learning in traditional classroom settings.

### Helping Our Newcomers Prepare for Employment Success (HOPES)

Essential programming to help job seekers and those needing to enhance their career skills, via coaching support and mental health counselling in the context of resettlement stress.

### Entrepreneurial Excellence and Leadership (EXL)

Complete program giving entrepreneurial newcomers resources, coaching, peer support, and guidance to start and grow their business.

## LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR NEWCOMERS TO CANADA (LINC)

English-language classes for adult learners from literacy to upper intermediate level to acquire the language skills and confidence they need to succeed in social, educational, and work situations.

The corresponding **Care for Newcomer Children (CNC)** service provides fun and educational activities for young children so parents can focus on their studies.

## LIFE & CAREER COACHING & TRAINING

### She-Covery Services

These services help transition newcomer women from unemployment or underemployment conditions into job market opportunities.

## EMPLOYMENT READINESS PROGRAM

Newcomers get individual support to develop their own career and employment plan. Group workshops are an opportunity for people to meet, network, discuss important topics related to soft skills, and become employment ready in Canada.

*"[The settlement worker] was amazing, she dedicated herself to me, giving me one hour one-on-one counselling, trying to explain to me the form of a CV in Canada and the strategies for showing my talent to employers. After 3 months of hard work, the effort gave the result, I received the proposals for jobs."*

– Diana, Employment Readiness and She-Covery participant

Read Diana's full story on page 18

## BRIDGING PROGRAMS

Training and support for internationally trained professionals to help bridge their career experiences to the Canadian labour market.

- **Bridge to Registration and Employment in Mental Health (BREM)**
- **Bridge to Employment in Media and Communications (BEMC)**
- **Bridge to Employment in Services for Immigrant Populations (BESIP)**
- **Bridge for Immigrant Women Reskilling into IT Coding Professions (C-Women)**



# STRATEGIC GOALS AND IMPACT

As the Centre entered its 40th year of service, we deepened our commitment to providing innovative, responsive programs and services that support full social and economic integration of newcomers to Canada.

Our newest strategic plan to **Align**, **Leverage** and **Invest** guided our work.



LINC Class Holiday Party with students and teachers



Our staff promoting our programs and services at Toronto Newcomer Day



**ALIGN** our programs and services to realize socially just newcomer integration

**LEVERAGE** our experience and expertise to lead for impact

**INVEST** in ourselves today to ensure a bold future tomorrow



Migrating our processes to the cloud







**ALIGN** our programs  
and services to realize  
socially just newcomer  
integration



**LEVERAGE** our  
experience and  
expertise to lead  
for impact



**INVEST** in ourselves  
today to ensure a  
bold future tomorrow

## GOALS

Adopt a clear and actionable approach to advocacy within a social justice and anti-poverty framework.

Strengthen capacity for individual/group leadership and civic engagement, to support community development and advocacy, with a focus on anti-poverty work.

Offer innovation in language learning that reaches the most marginalized communities.

Deepen our education, training, bridging, and social enterprise work.

Embed improved mental health as a key social determinant of health into all the work we do.

Build on our tech-forward approach to innovate on service delivery in a hybrid space.

## GOALS

Promote our expertise at cross-sectoral programming, funding, and policy tables, particularly in the areas of mental health, adult education, leadership, social justice, and community-building.

Build strategic partnerships with research and evaluation groups to contribute to the body of evidence-based practices in newcomer integration.

Develop and implement a leading-edge marketing, communication, and brand strategy grounded in the voices of newcomers that showcases our work across sectors and audiences.

Leverage our story and our impact to strengthen work in resource development and building cases of support.

## GOALS

Strengthen our commitment to social justice and anti-oppression at all levels of our organization.

Create a talent management plan that addresses the evolving realities of non-profit work.

Invest in our staff with continuous training and development so as to allow the realization of high-quality hybrid service delivery models.

Deepen our development of tech-forward infrastructure, systems, and processes to support new models of service delivery.





## **ALIGN our programs and services to realize socially just newcomer integration**

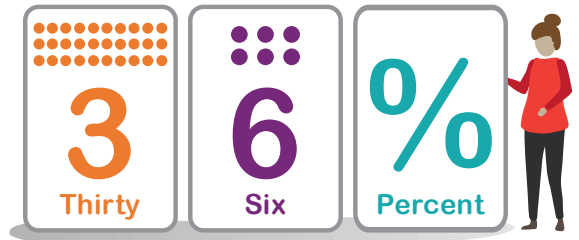
### **GOAL: Offer innovation in language learning that reaches the most marginalized communities.**

Our Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) – one of the longest-running LINC programs across Toronto – and Language Instruction Giving Hope to Trauma Survivors (LIGHTS) programs continued their excellence in teaching English to newcomers.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Centre has provided services online. In 2022, with pandemic restrictions lifting and people beginning to return to pre-pandemic activities, LINC conducted a survey to hear students' preferred mode of learning. This was the first time the survey was available in 10 languages, allowing us to reach a diverse audience and allowing the contributors to answer questions more comfortably. The languages included Tigrinya, spoken by the Tigray people from Ethiopia, as there is a growing immigrant community of Tigray people near the Keele office.

Over 80% of survey respondents – primarily upper-level students – preferred online classes, while only about 15% – mostly lower-level students – wanted in-person classes. During the pandemic, we offered seven online classes until September 2022, when we returned with two of the seven classes in-person. We also began to see a steadily growing wait list for both in-person and online classes, that signified a growing interest in our program.

Because learning English is a vital early goal for many newcomers, LINC often sees the newest and most vulnerable immigrant



Percentage of clients who progress through CLB levels on an annual basis

communities. In 2022, about a third of the LINC student population were Afghans and Ukrainians. They found their way to the Centre through our grassroots community outreach and referrals from MNLCT's community partners. Not only did they begin to acquire language skills, but they also received support from programs across the Centre to help them overcome resettlement trauma and better adjust to life in Canada.

Similarly, participation in our alternative language program – LIGHTS – increased and over 90% of participants reported improved mental health.

The program continued to reach the most vulnerable newcomers like one of our senior students, who completed the LIGHTS program together with their partner. They were diagnosed with cancer during that time and started receiving radiotherapy. However, they continued attending and participating actively during our online classes. Now that their health is more stable, they registered and can attend in-person LINC classes. The couple said that they felt and appreciated the support they received in our classes while going through the rough patch.

### **Goal: Strengthen capacity for individual/group leadership and civic engagement, to support community development and advocacy, with a focus on anti-poverty work.**

MNLCT worked with many dedicated volunteers, helping our teams to deliver



Some LINC classes started to meet in-person at our Keele office after pandemic restrictions were lifted.

services, especially in areas of high demand. Our newest volunteer partnership was with our own Bridge to Employment in Services for Immigrant Populations (BESIP) students who worked with the settlement team to serve clients. Students also prepared a research projects and presented their findings which helped shape settlement work. The topics were “Gentrification and the Housing Crisis” and “Clients under Precarious Immigration Status”.

The students learned best practices – through workshops, training, and shadowing settlement counsellors from our experienced settlement team – while also giving back to the community. Marianne Boyd, Director of Adult Education at the Centre said, “Our settlement team helps to shape the settlement workers of tomorrow.”

Other Centre teams also offered learning opportunities to volunteers and placement students and in true MNLCT fashion, most of our volunteers were from our newcomer communities. These internationally trained immigrants brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Centre, contributing writing, marketing, interpersonal communication, translation, and organizational skills among others.

In turn, the Centre introduced them to the dynamics of the Canadian work force and culture. Our volunteers spoke of improved English communication skills and confidence, a more in-depth understanding of their field in Canada, and a better sense of the next steps in their settlement journey.

### **Goal: Deepen our education, training, bridging, and social enterprise work.**

With the late-2021 announcement of secured funding for our proposed BESIP and Bridge for Immigrant Women Reskilling into IT Coding Professions (C-Women) programs, our bridging team raced to build relevant, meaningful programs for the first cohorts.

The initial proposals were reevaluated and new partnerships – such as those with The



Our BESIP and BEMC students were thrilled to meet each other in person, and with their instructors in the fall.

Tech Effect, and the MNLCT Settlement team – emerged. The Bridging team doubled in size, bringing on project coordinators, placement counsellors, and industry experts to develop and deliver the curricula. And in early 2022, the programs were launched to two small but dedicated groups of immigrant professionals.

Since then, BESIP and C-Women have continued to evolve and become more streamlined to achieve specific employment goals. C-Women, for example, now focuses on skills in Quality Assurance Automation instead of coding skills in general. The new programs have “grown tremendously,” according to Marianne, and as the programs advanced, “The team grew too, finding out how best to serve our clients.” Marianne said.

BESIP added more skill-specific workshops to support development of practical skill sets like case management, and for C-Women, based on research and the advice of our Program Advisory Committee, we modified the program curriculum to include online, synchronous, and technical instruction. Such adjustments made programs more relevant to our audiences.

**“I had worked in the social services environment in the past and needed to refresh my knowledge on the field’s best practices, work ethics, legislation and available resources. That’s why I entered [BESIP] at the Mennonite New Life Centre. After a few months of classes, I learned a lot from highly qualified instructors and now I feel ready to help other new Canadians to succeed here.”** said Freddy Velez, BESIP graduates.

Pou, one of the graduates of the C-Women program shared her experience of the program. She said,



**“C-Women IT Bridging Program has been a very useful, learning and enriching program. The course enhanced and supported our effort to develop and reinforce our skills in both IT and many other aspects, including but not limited to career building, leadership and workplace communication skills etc.**

**Instructors shared their decades of teaching and work experience in professional training, academic management, career development, language assessment, help with linguistic and cultural competency, counselling, designing and managing bridging programs, supporting immigrants to integrate into the Canadian workforce.**

**IT instructors are passionate about teaching coding workshops in HTML, CSS, Generative art with P5JS, SQL and Python. The Python instructor was highly qualified, very interested and competent in teaching both experienced and non-IT experienced candidates.**

Percentage of newcomers self-report that as a result of an MNLCT program, they are working and/or seeking a promotion, or a better job



**Thank you MNLCT for providing us with this wonderful opportunity to join this program, to grow and reskill in IT professions.”**

The new programs ran alongside our existing Bridge to Registration & Employment in Mental Health (BREM) and Bridge to Employment in Media and Communications (BEMC) programs, which continued to attract professionals keen to continue their careers in their respective fields.

“The biggest achievement for us was every single one of our students that secured meaningful employment in their field or a related area,” says Marianne

### **Goal: Embed improved mental health as a key social determinant of health into all the work we do.**

The demand for mental health support was incredibly high in 2022. Children and youth – who spent formative years in isolation due to the pandemic – lacked the social skills needed to resume in-person activities and thus experienced social anxiety and bullying. Families, struggling with housing insecurity and the high cost of living, were at risk of being separated. Newly displaced people reeled from the shock of their migration experience, of not knowing the whereabouts of their loved ones, and from the confusion of unfamiliar surroundings. Our experienced Community Mental Health team offered caring, professional therapy for these individuals, families, and groups to help them cope and adjust.

“For instance the program supporting family connections, in the previous years we used to receive 3-4 clients, last year, we received 14.” said Leticiah Esquivel, Community Mental Health Manager and LIGHTS Manager.

After the Toronto District School Board reached out to us with concerns of immigrant children having difficulty integrating into school, we developed the Emotional Intelligence for Families program. Set to run in schools in early 2023, the program offers a series of mental health workshops and activities for immigrant students and their parents to help them build stronger relationships.

**“Before MNLCT, I felt lost. I couldn’t find a service that could help me. But now emotional knowledge has given me a freedom that I didn’t have before. My therapist helped me and gave me real advice on how to set my boundaries.”**



– Sandra, Compassionate Therapy Group participant

We extended our specialized mental health services to the Afghan, Ukrainian, and Arabic-speaking communities. By engaging with newcomer mental health practitioners from within these communities, we can not only support the community but also help the practitioners to develop their careers.

We deepened the therapeutic aspect of our programming, introducing Compassion Focused Therapy to our existing Spanish-speaking and Farsi-speaking women's groups.

### Goal: Build on our tech-forward approach to innovate on service delivery in a hybrid space.

In 2022, the Centre continued to use technology to serve our operational needs. We launched two major tech solutions; the first being a new **Client Management System**, Apricot, that enabled us to more easily collect and manage client data, customize reports, and identify service or community trends.

The flexibility of Apricot also meant we could finally implement our long-held vision of a **Central Intake** process. Central Intake aims to support clients in accessing holistic programming that meets their needs – regardless of how they came to know about the Centre.

## How does Central Intake work?

Clients who contact the Centre quickly get an appointment with a Central Intake team member who registers the client in Apricot and responds to their initial inquiry.

In the past, clients used to come for specific services and didn't know about the others. Now, when registering a client, Central Intake provides them with information about all the different services they can access. "We identify clients' needs through an initial assessment, and if we do not have the services, they need in-house, we refer them to outside agencies," Martha Granados, Program Manager, explained, "and we can even track the referrals, internally and externally, which is amazing," she added.

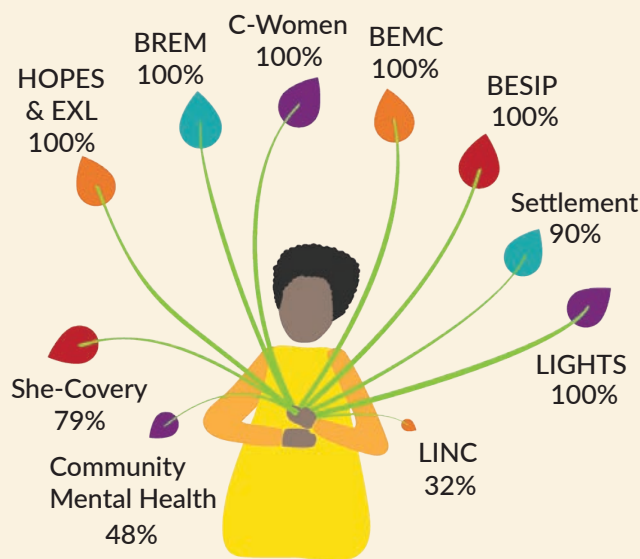
Central Intake has eased the process of supporting clients in reaching their goals. For example, those who are not able to apply for Bridging programs because of their language limitations, can be referred to LINC classes so they can get the level required in order to apply.

Central Intake has a dedicated team of staff, with staff from other programs contributing too.

Centralizing our client intake and registration allows us to track the client's journey through the Centre; for instance, how and when they registered with us and the programs or services they signed up for.

We can run reports which we were unable to do with our previous system. These detailed reports demonstrate accountability to our

### Newcomers are aware of the benefits of holistic settlement services, and access them



### Percentage of clients who received at least two different services and/or referrals that met their various needs

fundors and help us identify trends in our overall service delivery.

The second tech implementation was a new Learning Management System (LMS), which allowed us to customize courses for our clients to access online.

Adapting key mental health services to be offered through the LMS made it easier to manage the high demand for mental health support. The Community Mental Health team developed a series of online parenting workshops that were available in both instructor-led and self-directed format. The LMS was also used to offer sessions for Helping

Our Newcomers Prepare for Employment Success (HOPES) and Entrepreneurial Excellence and Leadership (EXL) programs.

A counsellor would connect with the participants in self-directed sessions to ensure that they were accessing the material with ease, and clients could book follow up appointments to make sure they were able to successfully complete the workshops and/or courses. Incorporating LMS options into the Centre's services increased easy access for our clients, especially for those services with waitlists, and helped us reach more clients. Those with travel barriers could still access services while clients who preferred in-person services could still get them as available.



## **LEVERAGE our experience and expertise to lead for impact**

**GOAL: Build strategic partnerships with research and evaluation groups to contribute to the body of evidence-based practices in newcomer integration.**

Our partnership with Humber College took a leap forward when our collaborative proposal to the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada's College and Community Social Innovation Fund was accepted.

This 3-year research project, the "Health for All Partnership (HAP)", aims to provide integrated health services for communities facing health inequities and barriers to care through the delivery of a community-based nurse-led health clinic. Together, HAP partners will design and develop, pilot, evaluate, and share knowledge about the clinic model.

Last year, the project focused on the 'design and develop' component. In September, student developers (3rd-year Humber nursing students) and their clinical instructor began their semester with MNLCT. They conducted a community needs assessment and environmental scan to pinpoint client health needs, specify the nursing services that will be provided at the student-led health clinic, and find opportunities to integrate the clinic's services with MNLCT's existing services.

Long identified as an area of need, supporting our clients in accessing and navigating the health care system adds another component to the holistic view of newcomer integration that the Centre champions.

**GOAL: Develop and implement a leading-edge marketing, communication, and brand strategy grounded in the voices of newcomers that showcases our work across sectors and audiences.**

In honour of our approaching 40th anniversary, we renewed our logo to better represent our vibrant, welcoming, modern organization in our next decades. The solid shape for the central image indicates our strong, reliable reputation and our bold, creative approach to empowering clients. The central 3-branched tree mimics the original design, with the branches angled upward to signify positive movement and growth – both for our clients and our organization. The leaves are no longer touching the outer border so the tree isn't constrained; like our clients and our organization, there is space to move and to reach for dreams.

Following quickly after the refreshed logo, we relaunched our website, [mnlct.org](http://mnlct.org) (see following page). A client-centered approach to the design resulted in several "hub" sections on the home page to quickly provide a breadth of relevant information to clients and other stakeholders. For example, the "Bridging Your Career" hub informs immigrant professionals not only about our bridging programs but also about other services that could support them to reach their goal of entering the Canadian workforce in a job that aligns with their skills and experience. It includes links such as to the higher-level LINC classes, to government pages with more information about bridging programs in Ontario, to MNLCT partner organizations that can offer financial tools and support, among other resources.

"The way the website was previously, was by program so clients needed to figure out which programs they were interested in, but now it is more client centered," says Tracy Docheff, Communications Manager.

We also maintained the traditional navigational structure of fixed menus to help our community partners and other stakeholders

Previous logo

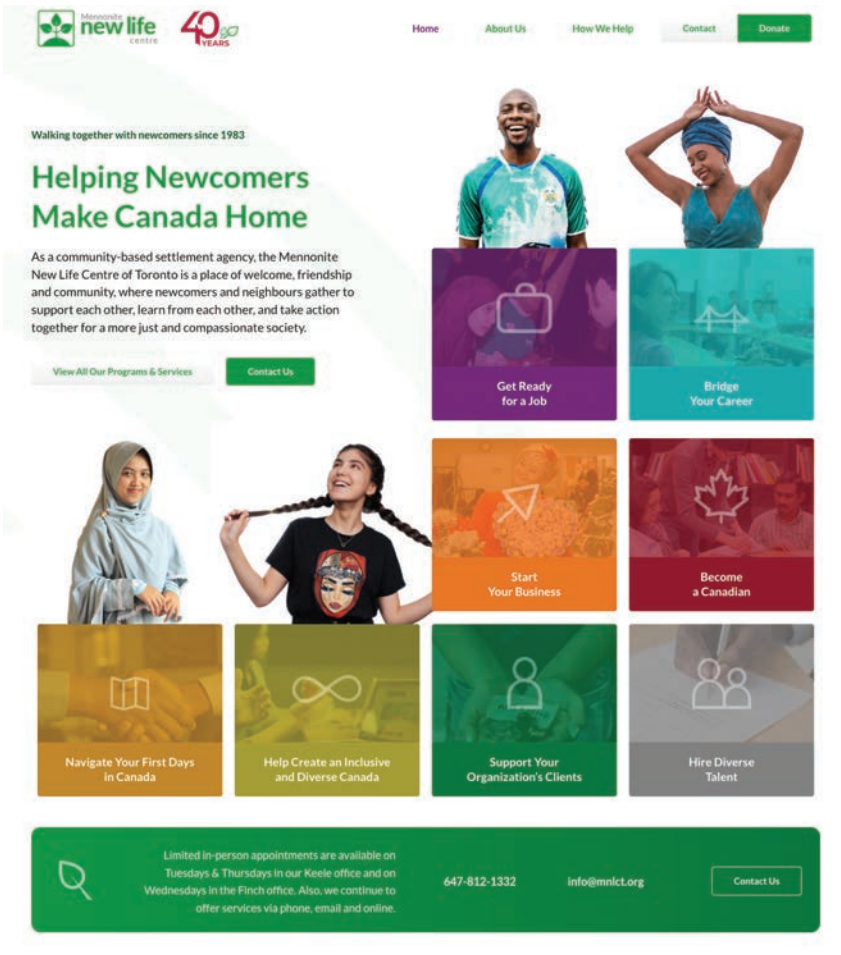


New logo





## New website homepage



navigate the extensive programming and organizational information. Behind the scenes, the new design included a way for simplified content management – reducing duplicated data and allowing quick and easy updates – and set the foundation for the enhanced Search Engine Optimization (SEO) work to follow.

**Since the relaunch, the number of visits to our website has doubled.**

Email is key in communicating with our stakeholders and we recognized the importance of a professional email signature. As the Centre's staff numbers grew and we struggled to ensure consistency, we reached for a tech solution and found one in the form of email signature management software. Introduced Centre-wide in early 2022, our email signatures are integrated with our email server and the personalized data – names, roles – is populated jointly by our Information Technology and Human Resources teams so new staff can be set up quickly. Not only does this support a consistent, professional brand for MNLCT, but it also allows us to market our programs and services through the graphics that are included with each email we send.



**INVEST in ourselves today to ensure a bold future tomorrow**

**GOAL: Invest in our staff with continuous training and development so as to allow the realization of high-quality hybrid service delivery models.**

The Centre introduced online, self-paced professional development courses for all staff through our first LMS. Staff were assigned five courses and allotted time during their work hours to complete them. The courses covered essential employability and workplace skills, communication, innovation, and diversity. This initiative not only built skills in various topics, but also provided staff with experience using an LMS – an important and transferable skill to have in the modern workforce.

On the professional training front still, the IT team invested in training staff to equip them with skills to handle the Centre's IT needs in-house. Prior to last year, we relied on outside companies to resolve our IT infrastructure issues. Last year, the IT team started developing all IT infrastructure in-house and phasing out 3rd party vendors. Nancy Sanchez, IT manager, attributed this to the continuous training of the IT staff, which shaped their skills to drive the Centre's tech-forward approach with ease, especially in this era of hybrid operation.

**GOAL: Deepen our development of tech-forward infrastructure, systems, and processes to support new models of service delivery.**

Last year, the IT team started the process of fully transitioning our tech services, including Office 365 and 3CX, to the cloud. By doing the full migration to cloud-based infrastructure, we could remove any remaining physical infrastructure components from our three office locations. This strategic approach to technology not only increased our network stability – meaning staff could work online from anywhere without interruption to services – and decreased our



## GOAL: Create a talent management plan that addresses the evolving realities of non-profit work.

To streamline the hiring process, the Centre invested in an online Human Resources (HR) system. “We reduced the time we spent on the recruitment process by 60%” said Rotimi Okuneye, HR Manager. The automation also helped facilitate collaboration between recruitment committee members, making the process more transparent and allowing each member to make independent decisions.

A key component of attracting talent to the organization is our ability to offer competitive salaries. Coupled with the increasing inflation rates of last year, this became an even more urgent issue to address. The Centre engaged a consultant to inform our understanding of how our funded positions are remunerated compared to others within and outside the sector. With this information, we began approaching funders to highlight the issue of low staff salaries across the sector. While an increase was not realized in 2022, we remain hopeful that our efforts – along with those of our colleagues across the sector – will result in an appropriate adjustment in upcoming funding contracts.

With the increase in the number and complexity of issues our clients were managing, it was important to support staff in keeping themselves healthy too – especially given the cumulative impact of nearly two years of pandemic-related challenges. As an organization that centers mental wellness for our clients, we also care for our staff's mental well-being. We delivered mental health workshops, offered psychotherapy services, and continued to offer dedicated days off as needed to support individual and family wellness.



Our streamlined intake and technological improvements help us to better serve our clients like our Mandarin-speaking Seniors Group (top) and our LIGHTS classes (bottom).

in-house maintenance requirements, but it will also save the Centre more than \$20,000 in equipment costs every 3 years.

Our Finance team also moved forward in their adaptation of tech, going paperless with our accounting system, and securely storing invoices, receipts, and other supporting documents online. We also moved away from using cheques and embraced online banking, with over 90% of the Centre's payments made through bank-to-bank Electronic Funds Transfers or the faster option, Email Money Transfers. These initiatives mean less office storage space is needed and Finance staff aren't tied to a physical office, enabling them to participate in the Hybrid Work Model too. And through it all we maintained our solid record of sending out 100% of our funder reports on time.

It is the nature of the non-profit sector that funding for new or pilot programs is often tenuous, and such was the case for three of our most innovative and holistic programs as their contracts ended in 2022. The fact that we were able to quickly engage another funder – ensuring the programs could continue seamlessly – spoke to the strength of the programs and the agility and creativity of our staff and leadership.



# Hybrid Models

## HYBRID SERVICE DELIVERY

Since the start of the pandemic – and even before, in the case of the bridging programs – the Centre has offered virtual services to clients, supplemented with limited in-person appointments based on client need. As 2022 unfolded, though, it was clear that our clients were looking to start connecting more with us in person. Bit by bit we began opening our offices more regularly to accommodate the increase in requests for in-person services, while maintaining virtual services for clients who needed more time to reengage.

When September arrived, we welcomed our first LINC students at our newly renovated Keele office. “The in-person classes filled up really quickly,” said Jorge Silvestri, LINC Program Manager. “Within a month both classes were full.”

We also resumed in-person Care for Newcomer Children (CNC). “None of the children was older than thirty months. They had not lived outside of the pandemic. They were isolated with their parents, no daycare, they were immigrants with no extended families,” Jorge said, “we were the first human characters that they saw apart from their parents,” he added. This was a real challenge to the team because none of the children had a real idea of how to play rather than grabbing toys from one another and crying. The childminders had a hard time teaching them to socialize appropriately, but with time and patience and the resilience of the children, things were resolved.



Children in the Care for Newcomer Children (CNC) daycare working on a paper garden at our Keele office.

Some clients liked that they didn’t have to travel to get services so they prefer phone or Zoom appointments or online LINC classes.

“The solidification of the online format as a method of choice for people to learn was a huge success,” said Jorge. “After 3 years of the pandemic, we realized that online learning is here to stay.” LINC students, especially the upper levels continued to prefer online to in-person classes.

## HYBRID WORK MODEL

With staff gradually returning to working in-person as well as maintaining online services, it was evident the Centre would need a unified hybrid work model. The one we developed uses a 3-days-in, 2-days-out work arrangement, and allowed a blend of both in-person and virtual services to meet clients’ preferences and pandemic restrictions.

“We introduced the hybrid work policy with the specific intention of meeting the different program’s unique needs,” said Rotimi Okuneye, HR Manager. “While the usual expectation is the 3/2 split, every program can decide what works best for them, as long as it doesn’t affect the Centre’s operations.”

Most staff were willing to return to in-person work because they understood the importance of offering services in person, especially for clients who aren’t comfortable or able to access them online.

This, according to Martha Granados, “showed how resilient we are as an organization and how committed we are to newcomers.”

“The way we moved out of the pandemic to become more adaptable to the new way was amazing,” said Loida Lopez, Director of Finance and Administration.



## MNLCT provides comprehensive support for starting a new life in Canada: Diana's Story

By Claudia Porras



A year ago, Diana, her husband, and two daughters made the life-changing decision to relocate to Canada from Mexico.

Originally a sociologist, Diana had more recently been working as a yoga instructor and CrossFit trainer. Diana's priority had always been the well-being of her daughters and her career shift had provided a better work-life balance. Now, concerned about their safety in Mexico, the couple opted to move to Canada.

When she first arrived, getting a job was challenging due to the complexity of her professional profile and the long gap in employment. It was when Diana felt lost in the unfamiliar job search process that a friend recommended the MNLCT, where she was warmly welcomed. She enrolled in the She-Covery Program and participated in the Employment Readiness Program.

*"[The settlement worker] was amazing, she dedicated herself to me, giving me one hour one-on-one counseling, trying to explain to me the form of a CV in Canada and the strategies for showing my talent to employers. After 3 months of hard work, the effort gave the result, I received the proposals for jobs."*

Currently, Diana is training individuals in housekeeping as well as coaching CrossFit at a gym, and she feels motivated to develop her skills starting with basic tasks and gradually progressing.

Along with employment training, Diana received comprehensive support from the Centre, including help registering their youngest daughter in high school, navigating the city via public transportation, and accessing food banks.

"At MNLCT, I received invaluable support from the staff without having to give anything in return. They made me feel that I was not alone and provided immense support to me and my family during our difficult beginning."

Diana is confident that all her efforts are worthwhile since she knows her family will have a better quality of life in Canada.

# OUR PEOPLE

The number of employees at the Centre increased again, and again it was not about hiring more people to do the same thing, rather, recruiting new talent and skills for creative problem solving, digital aptitude, and improved service delivery.

## Board of Directors

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# SUMMARY OF AUDITED FINANCIALS



MNLCT received \$4,746,832 in revenues, an increase of approximately **31.80%** over **2021** levels. In addition, MNLCT saw continued support from donors and foundations that fund important mental health and integration projects throughout the year. Expenses were managed to budget.



## REVENUE

	2021	2022	2023 Estimate
Government	3,483,820	4,663,849	5,226,070
Foundations + Other	81,486	45,874	274,426
Donations (Individuals + Churches)	36,194	37,109	50,155
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,601,500</b>	<b>4,746,832</b>	<b>5,550,651</b>



## EXPENSES

	2021	2022	2023 Estimate
Staff	2,619,868	3,480,308	3,691,427
Building	473,491	495,495	573,295
Program	335,179	550,157	963,324
Office + Other	163,820	184,819	321,481
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,592,358</b>	<b>4,710,779</b>	<b>5,549,527</b>
Excess of revenue over expenses	<u><b>\$9,142</b></u>	<u><b>\$36,053</b></u>	<u><b>\$1,124</b></u>



# FUNDING PARTNERS & DONORS



We would like to thank our clients, staff, volunteers, placement students, donors, funders, community partners, and other supporters for engaging with us during this past year. Your generosity of time, talent, passion, and resources make our communities stronger and for that we are so appreciative. We look forward to our continued work together in building responsive programs and meaningful partnerships that bring about greater community impact and social change.



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This year we offer a special

**“THANK YOU!”**

to our newest donors. Thanks to you, our newcomer neighbours, friends, and colleagues will not feel alone in Canada; they'll know that someone cares. You are joining an amazing group of community builders and your contributions – whether large or small – actively shape a Canadian landscape that values diversity and growth.



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